

## WAHSATCH

Summit County

Railroad  
Class 2

As with the case of differentiating Uintah County, a man-made subdivision, from the Uinta Mountains, a natural feature, by the addition of an "h", likewise the town of Wahsatch is derived from the Wasatch Mountains. As the Union Pacific Railroad was being surveyed through the broad, high Wyoming prairies, this was the last location on the flat lands before the railroad drops down through Echo Canyon and into the Salt Lake Valley. Because of this feature, the townsite was a major construction camp, supply area and railhead. For a good part of 1868-69 hundreds of workers lived here while drilling the long Echo tunnel just west of town. A zigzag shoo-fly track began at Wahsatch and temporarily built around the tunnel. A round-house, locomotive shops, boarding houses and warehouses were also erected.

As the tunnel was completed and construction crews advanced to Ogden, the town became a division point for crew and engine changes, and servicing facilities. At the completion of the transcontinental railroad in May 1869, a meal station was established for passengers while waiting for locomotive changes. The town, being at the summit of Echo Canyon, also cut off helper engines which were needed to bring heavy freight trains up the canyon, service them, turn them around and send them back down to Echo or Ogden.

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*Ghost Towns of Utah*

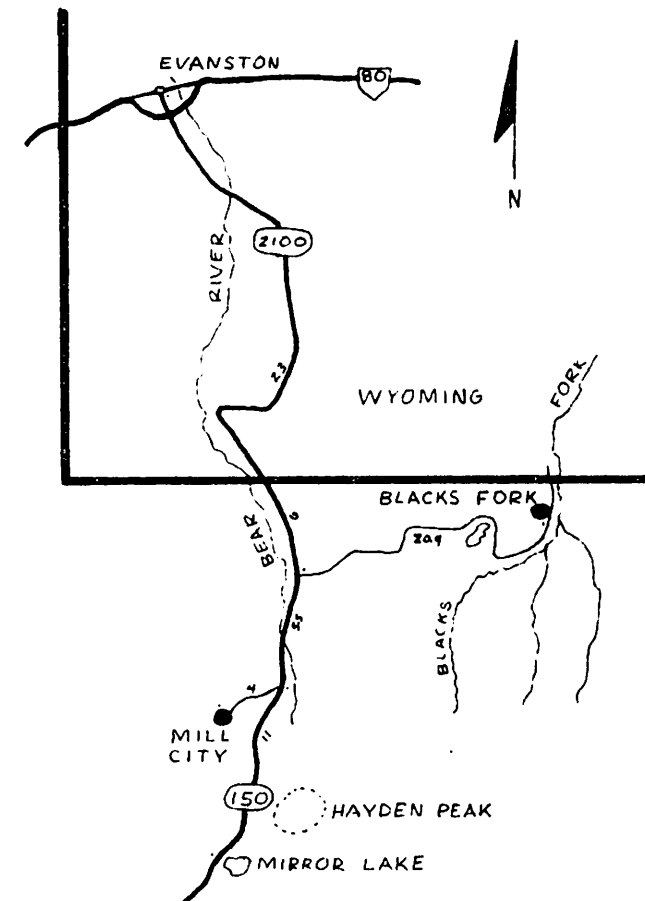
Eleven miles east of Wahsatch, a construction camp that had not died as the rails pushed westward, was actually building up and becoming quite permanent. This was Evanston, Wyoming Territory. In the early 1870's the town had grown bigger than Wahsatch and also had basic locomotive facilities so the division point was changed to Evanston and Wahsatch was quickly de-emphasized and depopulated. All the buildings were razed except for the depot and loading docks and maintenance buildings. The remainder of the town's life consisted of numerous sheep and cattle loadings from the Castle Rock area and dwellings for track crews.

In later years it was the headquarters for more construction as a new tunnel was drilled in 1916, a second track built and subsequently a deep cut made to further reduce the steep grade coming up Echo Canyon.

The entire townsite, eleven miles west of Evanston and 23 miles east of Echo, is on railroad property. Permission must be obtained from the station agent before venturing anywhere. The only relic of historic interest is the abandoned 1916 tunnel. The east portal is a few hundred yards west and downhill from the townsite and can be viewed from the edge of the ravine. By diligent searching, remnants of the wye on which the locomotives were turned can be seen in the immediate area of the vacant section houses which date only back to the 1930's. The depot built in the 1930's and unused for many years was torn down in 1969.

References: 7, 10, 21.

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# WAHSATCH, UTAH

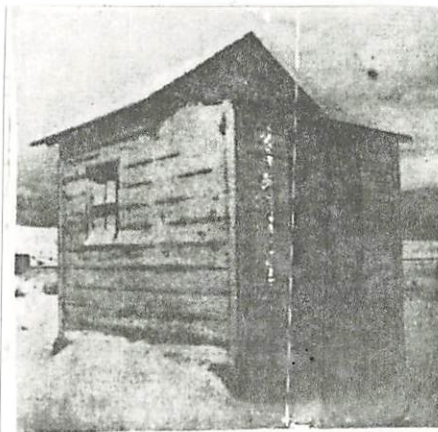
Postmaster Jessie Sundquist must have missed the good natured controversy as to whose post office is the smallest, for her headquarters at Wahsatch is 5 ft. 6 in by 6 feet and has been written up in Ripley's "Believe it or Not" on two different occasions.

The business of the office is seasonal and fluctuates. From April to December about 300 people are served, this district being the summer range for a number of large sheep and cattle companies. During these months the Post Office patrons include all the owners, foremen and herders of these livestock. During the winter the animals are all shipped south to the desert country of Utah and Nevada not to return until April again. During the winter only about 35 people are served, these being regular railroad personnel.

Mail is received and dispatched by the mail crane catcher pouch method.

The name Wahsatch is derived from the language of an early American Indian tribe referring to a small nearby lake fed by an underground spring where the Indians camped during their migration from summer to winter quarters. The word means "many waters" or "big waters".

The postmaster and her husband, Van, moved from Park City to Wahsatch 19 years ago and she became postmaster 2 years later. Mr. Sundquist is employed by the Union Pacific Railroad. They are parents of two daughters, one who lives in California with her husband and two sons, and the other who lives in Woodruff, Utah, with her husband, two sons and one daughter.



Post office at Wahsatch, 5 feet 6 inches by 6 feet.

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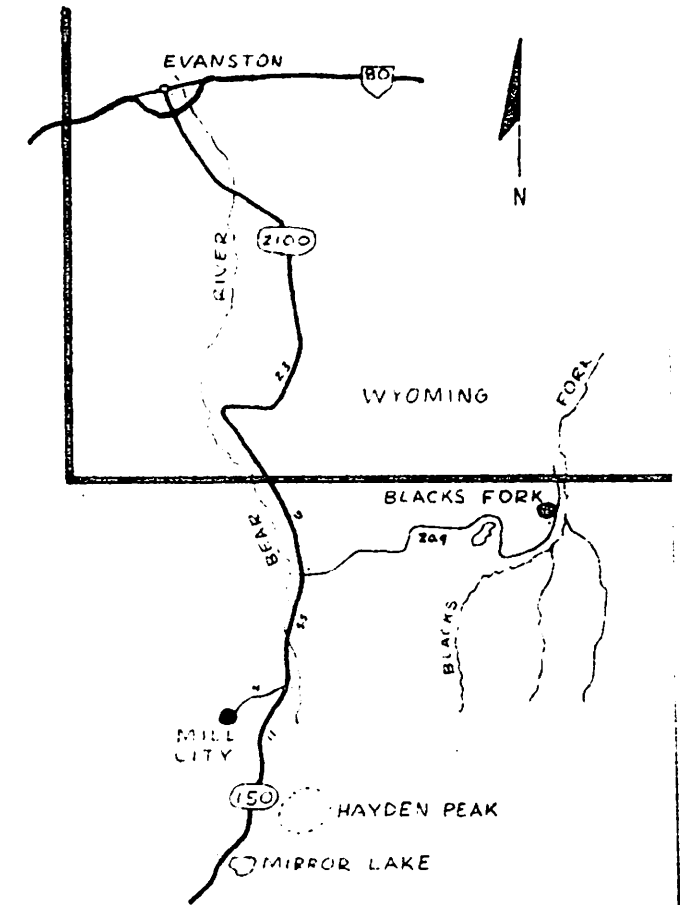
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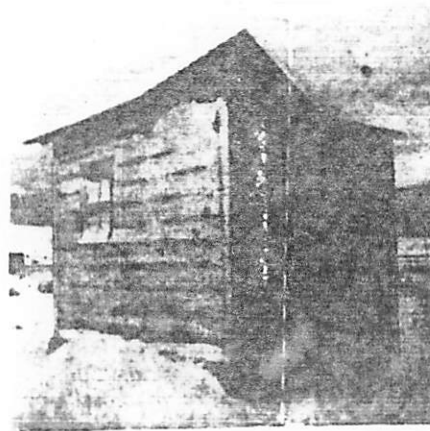
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